



**STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON JUVENILE JUSTICE**
Meeting Minutes
April 24-25: Riverton, WY

Agenda

Thursday, April 24, 2025

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes
- New Business
- Ongoing Business
- Committee Reports

Friday, April 25, 2025

- DFS Update/Report
- Community Participation
- Announcements
- County Highlights
- Adjournment

Members			Members			Others	
Abbey Kercher	C	P	Kassidy Thomas	C	P	Tanya Barcelona	
Adrienne Freng	C	P	Lila Konecky	C	Abs	Jerit Dion (FCYS)	
Alan Stuber	C	P	Logan Christie	C	Prx	Curtis Inman (DFS)	
Alexandra Bammel	C	Prx	Lynn Hutchings	EO	Abs	Jennifer Neely (DFS)	
Christina McCabe	EO	P	Maureen Clifton	C	Abs	Sierra Hernandez (FCYS)	
Chris Jones	C	Abs	Melinda Cox	C	P	Kristy Richmond (Riverton School District)	
Curtis Biggs	EO	P	Nathaniel Williams	C	Abs	Aziz Waheed (Riverton School District)	
Dale Weber	C	Abs	Nicole Hauser	C	P	Officer Tyler Larsen	
Damon DeBernadi	C	P	Rachel Rodriquez-Williams	EO	Abs		
Dustin Brown	EO	P	Ruth Ogden	C	P		
Dylan Pierce	C	Abs	Salli Volz	EO	P		
Erica Wood	C	P	Shawn Sitzman	EO	P		

Erika Sanchez	C	P	Sophia Gomelsky	C	Abs		
H.James Mike Causey	EO	Abs	Stacy Becker	C	Abs		
Hattie Calvert	C	P	Stacy M Nelson	C	P		
Jacob Edwards	EO	P	Brittany Cangialosi	C	P		
Jennifer Palser	C	P					

Call to Order

I. Call to Order: Thursday, April 24th at 1:00pm.

- a) House Keeping, Roll Call;
- b) Introductions;
- c) Declaration of Quorum; a quorum was established with 16 members present.

II. Approval of Minutes:

Approval of Minutes from the January 16-17th, 2025 meeting held in Cheyenne, WY; Erica Wood motioned to approve the draft minutes; Adrienne Freng seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried.

III. New Business:

a) Strategic Plan Review

One of the discussions previously was an opportunity for WYSAC to reach out and assist different committees for strategic plan creation. In addition, a reminder for different committees to look at strategic plan areas and if they need to make changes to their respective committee goals. Erica wanted strategic plan goals updated and submitted by September for review and then finalized by the November meeting.

b) Legislation

Topics around legislation were discussed in depth during Open Topics and Legislative Committee.

c) Collaboration with other councils -

Abbey Kercher had invited Tanya Barcelona with the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities to present.

Tanya introduced members of the panel and their roles and their purpose being to give voices regarding policy guidance and anything going through state education and advocating to John Ballow. Tanya highlighted Drill Down sessions that the panel review conducts to analyze gaps, educational savings, and graduation rates for SPED (Special Education) students. There were questions regarding the crossover between SPED students in facilities. The panel, as well as the youths respective school district or origin, review if IEP (Individualized Education Plan) services are being provided in those settings.

d) Stacy Becker Resignation

Erica discussed receiving an unofficial email from Stacy Becker relaying she planned to step down from her position within the SACJJ. Jacob confirmed there was no official resignation forwarded yet, but the committee discussed and planned for absorbing duties related to her role.

e) Open Topics - Property Tax Bill and Federal Cuts

Adrienne Freng performed a gap analysis for Albany county and raised the concern of the Property Tax Bill that recently went into effect and its negative impact on social service and juvenile justice services across the State. Adrienne raised questions around how the services in other communities may be affected or reduced as a result. Property taxes in general are a huge income for many counties and cities across the State.

Hattie Calvert discussed Fremont county being impacted incredibly hard by the property tax bill, as Fremont county has been asked to cut every budget by 10% which would likely lead to a position loss, or possibly the Day Reporting Center. Stacy Nelson discussed her agency receiving funding from Fremont and received an email that the social services contribution of this funding will be cut and cited that Fremont county had to cut approximately 5 million dollars.

Shawn Sitzman pivoted and discussed how Sweetwater county has been not funding non-profit agencies prior to the property tax cuts. Shawn added his knowledge of some adjustments with the ACG and Health and Human Service Grant that would result in reimbursement of funds taking longer than they had previously. Jacob Edwards relayed some CJSBs have reached out to DFS to modify their appropriation of CJSB funding to offset some of the cuts and welcomed other CJSBs to inquire if that was needed.

Damon DeBernardi discussed, with both the property tax bill cuts and federal cuts, it could be several more months before there is a clear picture of how juvenile services will be affected. Members of the SACJJ saw this fluctuation as an opportunity for action to help the communities collaborate in different ways to maintain services or support clients. Members of the SACJJ also discussed that funding for the Council itself could also be lost or cut, possibly incorporating ideas for generating funds in different capacities or language and tool tips in county report cards. Adrienne added, in discussions around pushing conversations about prevention funding and support to focus the audience away from legislation towards more local, communal, and operating agencies. Melinda Cox added that the SACJJ could also use their position to provide marketing/support for communities, such as cost comparisons, to help their programs advocate for prevention funding.

Jacob Edwards relayed an update from Laurel Wimbish from WYSAC about how federal cuts have affected the OJJDP Grants, and what they knew so far. WYSAC had not heard definitively if the Non-Participating State funds were going to be cut, but was monitoring the situation closely.

f) June Meeting Conflict

Brief discussions were held whether there would be significant overlap between committee members' time between the June's Children's Justice Conference. There

did not seem to be extraneous overlap and the June meeting would continue as scheduled.

g) Public Comment

There were no public comments or inquiries during this meeting.

IV. On-Going Business – Updates From:

a) Council Membership –

Jacob provided an overview of current member status, and updates on the membership status and called out expiring terms coming up in August 2025. Brittany indicated she had reapplied for her membership through the website but has not heard back.

A continued discussion ensued regarding Allen Thompson's (WASCOP) membership and invite to be a member or ex-officio member. It was discussed whether or not bylaws would need to change for Allen to join in Ex-Officio status. It was also noted that the SACJJ was missing membership representation from the Third Judicial District - Sweetwater, Uinta and Lincoln counties. Damon DeBernardi was going to reach out to a person for representation from that area. Nicole Hauser noted the Rock Springs Juvenile Detention Center was going to reclassify their detention beds as they were taking on a grant from ICE.

An Action item to have Brandon, Erica will talk with Allen Thompson, and make progress with Sweetwater county representation by the next meeting.

b) Governor's Office – Curtis Biggs

Curtis Biggs, replacing Jen Davis, introduced himself to the Counsel and discussed his intent to attend the entire SACJJ session. Erica provided an explanation for the delay in meeting with the governor and the governor's office in January and are about to submit a request to meet with the governor. Curtis reflected on the information discussed regarding the property tax bill and federal cuts, and Adrienne encouraged Curtis to provide that feedback to the Governor ahead of the meeting.

Curtis discussed Behavioral and Mental Health Programming continually at the front of the Governor's attention for this current term. Interim topics Curtis is currently involved with is EMS and Maternal OB, and while there isn't a huge overlap with JJ and those topics, he invited any feedback from the SACJJ involving those areas. Nicole Hauser and Adrienne discussed some feedback and where she could see improvement from the Governor's office moving forward, such as more responsive towards requests, presentations, and information return. Adrienne specifically wanted to improve the direct line of communication for feedback from reviewing bills prior to legislative session.

Curtis invited any members to reach out to him directly with any questions, concerns, or comments that may come up. Damon DeBernardi asked about any

impacts to the Behavioral and Mental Health Programming being affected by recent cuts, Curtis relayed there are some funding decisions on the federal level on their radar. Curtis inquired about newsletters or quarterly reports that are generated from SACJJ, and Erica and Jacob discussed what materials (Committee Reports, Minutes, Annual Report) are available.

c) **CJSB Reform** – Jacob Edwards

Jacob discussed CJSBs requesting and the need to possibly change distributed funding as an option. Jacob incorrectly discussed an audit however, he was mistaken, and that audit was specific to SACJJ funding. Jacob discussed DFS's goal to reappropriate the unused funding from non-participating counties. Jacob discussed how DFS would also be focusing harder on outcome data, potentially ensuring the funding is tied to not only children served, but also outcomes that are being achieved.

Jacob relayed DFS and WYSAC are also working on an updated MOU to share information both ways and discussed some of the barriers between the Counties MOUs to WYSAC to DFS and vice versa. Jacob discussed some other data projects he has attempted using JJIS and CJSB data.

d) **Budget Report/Grant Update** – Jacob Edwards

Jacob sent out an email of the SACJJ Expenditure Report and presented the overall budget. Jacob did not know if the new funding for the most recent or next FFY had been approved yet. Jacob discussed there would be a routine audit of the SACJJ budget in May 2025.

A discussion about how the SACJJ can utilize the funding differently moving forward. In the wake of recent funding cuts, having extra funding remaining is likely not to work to the Council's advantage. Shawn discussed recent DOJ grants that had been awarded that were removed. He relayed the things that are not statutorily mandated, and grants that are very TA or Coalition focused running parallel to statutory ones had been affected the most, whereas formula grants seem to be unaffected.

e) **Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ)**

Jacob relayed Maureen's notes on ICJ and confirmed how SACJJ's Action item to include ICJ, incoming and outgoing data for group quarterly. Reading of Maureen's explanation of how ICJ committee meets the criteria of ICJ Wyoming.

V. **Committee Reports**

a) **Executive Committee** – Logan Christie

Erica Wood and the executive committee discussed reaching out to county judges for invitation to SACJJ meetings. The SACJJ discussed the feasibility and appropriateness of judges attending, such as ensuring they be juvenile court involved, their scheduling, etc. Members of the SACJJ found great benefit in having a dialogue with judges and their opinions/approach on juvenile justice.

- b) **Grants Committee** – Logan Christie
Erica Wood reported for Logan and relayed they had not met because there were no additional grants to review.
- c) **Data Committee** – Adrienne Freng
Adrienne discussed that the formation of the data committee creating and establishing the framework for what WYSAC and Jacob with DFS can provide, it may not need to continue. Since Adrienne does not have direct access to the data, and since the committee has met its strategic plan goal, whether the committee should dissolve or change in its function after a reevaluation period during the next data committee meeting. Jacob discussed ideas for how the committee could pivot and change its role towards community focused data work.
- d) **Best Practices Committee** – Stacey Nelson
Stacey discussed an update on their subcommittee repository. The committee explored best practices, programs, and services used by facilities and programs that were submitted by members of the SACJJ to create a large contact list that's being reviewed for accuracy. Stacey is adding links to create a repository. Stacey added they discussed doing either a pamphlet, or an online accessible option for contacts beyond CJSBS and specific programs providing services across the state. The Council could explore linking that resource to the SACJJ website. The SACJJ discussed National Resources such as the California Clearing House, OJJDPs Crime Solutions, and program evaluation program out of UC Boulder. There was discussion around CJSBS or their funded programs would be open to receiving some support and structure with best practices around diversion operations. Members of the SACJJ supported the notion CJSBs could use and would want further support or direction from DFS through training opportunities or the Council itself.
- e) **Outreach/Youth Committee** – Erica Wood, Brittany Cangialosi
Erica discussed their recent committee meeting, developing a newsletter from that committee, and how these newsletters would allow for increased ease of creating the Annual Report. Erica discussed their committee discussing and evaluating how to aggregate local communities' feedback properly.
- f) **Legislative Committee** – Nicole Hauser
The legislative committee had not met since the last SACJJ meeting.
- g) **Ad-Hoc Committee**
Erica discussed with Stacy Becker stepping down how the Council wanted to approach this committee, their meetings and goals, as more than a month had passed since that group met. With the changing funding dynamics, some of the goals for training could be up in the air, but progress was made on developing the outline of a juvenile justice training event. Jacob proposed between Stacy resigning, the WYSAC funding dedicated to the conference being at risk, and progress being made, that committee may not be needed at this time. Adrienne

discussed SACJJ utilizing their funding differently to assist as SACJJ is in a loop for how it utilizes its funding. Adrienne added it is routine for there to be an initial plan for how a budget is going to be expended prior to entering fiscal year. Erica asked if Brandon provides an outline for how funds would be used but Jacob was unsure of the process but discussed routine DFS procedure for budgets. Jacob asked the Council why there is not a Finance Committee as it may behoove them for overseeing their expenditures more intently. Damon DeBernardi discussed how COVID created the excess funding in the SACJJ budget because people were not meeting as regularly in person and that it could catch up soon.

The Council decided to leave the chair of the committee vacant for now.

Friday, April 25th, 2025

VI. DFS Update/Report

Jacob Edwards provided the DFS update in lieu of the Director and Senior Administrator. Jacob updated the Council with updates on the SACJJ audit to occur on May 12th. Jacob discussed DFS's DOJ partner and discussions that had been ongoing with them, and gave slight assurance funding for SACJJ may be fine during the federal cuts.

Jacob provided updates on DFS new case management system, WYOSAFE, and how that has impacted the Agency, ongoing updates, and cross over with juvenile justice services within the Agency. Curtis Inman, Riverton DFS Supervisor, and Jennifer Neely, Fremont county DFS District Manager, provided personal insight into the case management system, highlighting support from the state office and recognizing initial bugs and errors. Jacob discussed the agency's goals to digitize work as much as possible, and how that plays into WYOSAFE, data collection, and leveraging IT support for DFS field offices. Jacob highlighted ongoing IT efforts the Agency is undergoing to have its various systems interact with each other in beneficial ways.

Jacob discussed JJIS and updates to the system prior to user rollout, including improving the metrics being received from the court and visually displaying correct information. Jacob highlighted MOUs being done with the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ). Jacob discussed recent efforts by DFS with Collaboration for Youth and Public Safety Initiative.

Jacob discussed Child Family Service Reviews, federal cut effects on CFSR federal reviewing partners, and also how the CFSR process and DFS Juvenile Justice cases are sometimes not congruent when it comes to evaluating case work. Curtis Inman and Jennifer Neely provided anecdotal examples of how the CFSR standard can negatively affect the evaluation process of a JJ case while maintaining the integrity of the process. Jacob discussed the CFSR impact on the agency's program improvement plan and strategic goals.

Jacob proposed questions and conversation topics for the SACJJ concerning detention centers not taking out-of-county youth and juvenile delinquents being taken into protective custody instead of going through a Single Point of Entry (SPE) meeting. Curtis Inman and Jacob discussed the SPE process and what factors would need to be considered and present at the time of juvenile interaction with law enforcement to warrant protective custody being taken. Curtis highlighted the working relationship between DFS and law enforcement when it comes to protective custody decisions around juveniles for non-abuse or neglect-related situations. Curtis highlighted the difficulty of protective custody when there is no detention center for juveniles when severe crimes occur, and that being potentially inappropriate. A discussion ensued with law enforcement citations for felony theft when minors are stealing vehicles.

Adrienne and Curtis discussed leveraging Central Wyoming Community College and their students to improve mentorship or local programming opportunities for youth. There was a discussion of the distribution of cases processed per year and how they are split between CHINS, Delinquencies and those not involved in court. Curtis Inman discussed CJP data would have numbers on the distribution, but the SACJJ could not find specifics but believed their delinquency cases are third highest behind Natrona and Laramie counties, respectively.

Jennifer Neely discussed the lack of service providers and programs as the need for children to be involved in services exists, but it has been consistently difficult to fill those positions to make those programs available or impactful. The limited resources in Fremont county are only becoming more limited. For example, Big Brothers Big Sisters exists but they don't have any mentors or staff to service kids. In addition, in Riverton, there is no recreation center for youth to use. There was discussion that the local Fremont county judges feel that the local District Court is jammed with high level offenses for juveniles and not statuses offenses. Curtis discussed different juvenile justice models of retribution, community protection, and competency development and proposed the State may have moved too far away from retribution, a notion supported by Riverton Police Department (RPD), citing a helpful solution within Fremont county would be a juvenile detention center.

Jennifer discussed visiting a Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) site in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and explored that facility and organization with local stakeholders. There were kids on community release who had committed major crimes, and they were able to be out in the community receiving services and Fremont county felt this would be beneficial. Funding that went to that type of detention center could be routed to Diversion related services for the community. Now, there is more difficulty even accessing juvenile detention facilities in the State (oftentimes needing to send kids out of state to Idaho), and its compounding juvenile crime and leaving the County with lack of options. Curtis and RPD both felt there were not enough repercussions due to the lack of facility options and it was detrimental to the community.

VII. Community Participation

a) Fremont County Youth Services

Hattie Calver presented and discussed the Fremont County Youth Services program. Fremont County Youth Services process around 300 citations a year, majority of which are screened at SPE and then Diversion services are provided if recommended. FCYS is involved with Pre-Court Diversion. FCYS cannot refer youth to the juvenile treatment court program if they are only involved at the pre-court level. Hattie discussed alcohol related offenses, particularly those with high BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) and DUI (Driving Under the Influence), which are most prevalent in the county. Hattie relayed most of the high BACs come from Riverton and receive more SRO referred youth from Lander due to behavioral concerns within the school. Across the county, they see waves of vehicle thefts. The average case load for a worker at FCYS is approximately 32 cases/youth. It was discussed Fremont county has the third highest crime rate in the state.

b) Riverton Police Department

Tyler Larsen, police officer of 11 years, with the Riverton Police Department discussed his experience and perspective with juvenile justice in the county. Tyler relayed police and sheriff staffing has improved over the year with both Lander and Riverton PD being fully staffed. Tyler stressed that while Riverton crime is higher, that violent offenses that occur are not random but are domestically related. Furthermore, Tyler discussed there not being a significant consequence the county can offer without a juvenile detention center, and that often time delays in court lead delinquents to commit offenses between their first offense and them appearing in court. Tyler discussed that local youth, particularly older teens, do not fear the police or criminal consequences, saying often status offenses are cited and released to guardians. Tyler expressed that the system doesn't work when the youth don't have anything to lose, and stressed harsher consequences would be beneficial to the community youth and deterring criminal behavior. Tyler discussed scenarios of frustration in the past when a youth was released from a treatment center for being too violent and was returned to the community and school right after, and since there was no appropriate youth detention center, that youth continue to exist in the community committing crimes and being violent.

There was a discussion of the distribution of cases processed per year and how they are split between CHINS, Delinquencies and those not involved in court. Curtis Inman discussed CJP data would have numbers on the distribution but the SACJJ could not find specifics but believed their delinquency cases are third highest behind Natrona and Laramie county. Tyler discussed the lack of retribution and hammer for juvenile offenses are leading local community members to consider vigilante justice which would be detrimental to both youth and the people in the community taking action. Tyler felt the only consequence

that exists is waiting until the juvenile turns 18 and then bringing them to adult jail.

c) Riverton School District

Aziz Waheed with Riverton Middle School and Kristy Richmond with the high school held discussions around the culture, difficulties with youth, and consequences. Aziz discussed the middle school experience and the crossover with juvenile justice, citing trends in younger children (4th and 6th grade) being involved with more tobacco and sex abuse materials. The school district handles tobacco citations in-house as the Municipal court was overburdened with it and court involvement was not showing deterrence improvement. The school district will often cite after several attempts of in-house discussions, internal diversion, planning and consequences. The middle school discussed an increase in child sex abuse materials being produced by children who have access to phones and cited lack of parental oversight and concern as a big factor in that issue continuing. Aziz discussed DCI (Division of Criminal Investigation) and ICAC (Internet Crimes Against Children) with the Attorney General's office being involved but it usually occurs too late when the specific instance of sexual abuse material occurred months to a year prior. The middle school bans phones within the building. Aziz discussed communications difficulties between local Northern Arapaho DFS offices and the children; citing lack of communication when children come into protective custody, if a home is changed, or if the child is experiencing some trauma.

Kristy Richmond discussed her experience with youth at the high school and juvenile justice. Kristy discussed lack of consistent enrollment, parent involvement, and chaotic home lives are large contributing factors in their gaps of education. Kristy detailed the lack of preparation and disruptions prior to high school, as highlighted by Aziz Waheed, that youth have no realistic opportunity to succeed in a more structured high school environment. Kristy stated the children are so broken by the lives they are trying to survive at home and socially that they only see the tip of the iceberg at school. She felt the school district was losing the engagement, commitment and ability for youth to engage responsibly in school at younger and younger ages. Kristy felt enforcing truancy in Wyoming would help combat the loss of child engagement in school districts.

The alternative high school in Fremont county was discussed briefly, however, it was discussed the same disruptions in school affect attendance and enrollment even at the alternative school. Kristy talked about the gap between younger crime and lack of enrollment; making the schools in ways "powerless" to be able to provide services or support because there is, at times, no overlap between those two groups.

A discussion ensued around why are kids within the at-risk population successful. Aziz discussed trying to find the right setting for the at-risk kids to be successful. The middle school created a step-up school program for those kids

with poor, irregular attendance, social struggles, and disruptive behaviors, in that setting to provide more hands-on interaction with those kids. Aziz believes that creating a safe environment with positive peers could give the kids a reason to want to return. The hands-on approach helps better establish stronger relationships that they feel can give kids more buy in. Aziz added the concept of the “one caring adult strategy” can help this at-risk population.

VIII. Fremont County Highlights

Damon DeBernardi highlighted the uniqueness of Fremont county due to its various overlapping jurisdictions, including tribal jurisdictions, and that the continuum of options for juvenile justice, as echoed by community participants, does not exist to give balance or strategy to the options available. Not having the final piece, like a JDC, puts strains on the remaining services and leads to inappropriate support. In addition, Damon noted family court is only available in Lander; making it further strained on Riverton-specific families to access if it is required.

Hattie discussed difficulties with the family component of juvenile services, in that when youth do return from out of state or out of county facilities, they return to the same environment, at times gang environments, that will likely lead to recidivism. Hattie added access to affordable child care and housing are barriers in Fremont county because teens are asked to take that responsibility on and miss school or positive social engagement.

Abby Kercher noted there is less judges within Fremont county compared to Natrona and Laramie (2 to 4, respectively), family court system needs more leverage to address family issues, some way to enforce truancy, local detention center would be beneficial so youth aren't sent out of state, and while there are local resources (besides a recreation center), there are no staff or volunteers. Strength related, there is a step-up day school, day reporting center, and multiple layers of court supervision between Fremont County Youth Services and DFS.

IX. Announcements

Brandon Schimelpfenig will return for the June SACJJ Meeting.

X. Adjournment

Erica reviewed the next meeting would be June 19th and 20th in Gillette, WY. Erica motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:16AM.